



BELLEVILLE - AREA INDEPENDENT

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Serving the Communities of Belleville, Sumpter and Van Buren

FREE

VBPS board considers putting Sinking Fund vote on Nov. ballot

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

At Monday's regular meeting of the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education, via Zoom, the board discussed putting a Sinking Fund millage question on the Nov. 2 ballot.

The Sinking Fund Plan was last renewed in 2015 and was approved for seven years at 0.4917 mill. It is now set to expire in 2022.

Rob Kakoczki of Plante Moran CRESA said the current Sinking Fund millage brings in about \$873,000 a year and that is used for site and building issues throughout the district.

The district has a three-year plan for projects in 2021, 2022, and 2023, but it is only funded for the first two years of the plan. He said the plan doesn't include emergencies.

He detailed projects totaling \$356,000 in 2021, \$1,321,500 in 2022, and \$2,020,000 in 2023, for a total of \$3,697,500.

School Supt. Pete Kudlak said the buildings are aging and the new Belleville High School is now 11 years old. He said the goal is to take care of the buildings for the long run without taking money out of the classrooms.

Supt. Kudlak said the November 2021 election renewal is not technically a renewal since new rules allow the sinking funds to now also be used for technology, land purchases, and possibly buses.

"We're covered through 2022 and we'll have one more chance in spring of 2022 if it is not passed in 2021," Kudlak said.

He said they could have a seven-year extension, as they have in the past, or it could be for ten years. He said they will look at what other schools are doing.

Kudlak urged the board members to talk to their constituents and come back on March 22 for a possible vote.

He showed charts noting Van Buren Public Schools have a sinking fund of

0.4917 mill and bond debt of 2.98 mills and compared to other districts rates 26 out of 32 in taxes.

"We could raise this quite a bit and still be in the lower districts," Kudlak said.

"This shows what we're asking is much lower than the majority of the other school districts and we're still keeping our buildings maintained," said board president Amy Pearce.

Board vice president Susan Featheringill said Edgemont and Rawsonville schools are 20 years old and are starting to need love and care and maintenance.

"It's better for it to come out of a sinking fund than the general fund money for our classrooms," Featheringill said.

Kudlak said all "our mechanicals" have life spans and, "We'll need more than we're getting."

He said at the next meeting they will discuss "where we should set the millage and for how long."

"Talk to your people," Kudlak said to board members. "You all have people. That's how you get elected." He said Plante Moran will help like they did for the bond issue.

"We all know better schools bring better property values for everyone," said treasurer Simone Pinter.

Kudlak said Plante Moran gave talking points for the bond issue and that was very helpful to have a common message.

Kakoczki said by August they have to have the ballot wording to the clerk and August is going to come up quickly.

"At the next meeting I'll have a recommendation and we can nail down what you want to do," Kudlak said. "It would be nice to have that decided by the end of March."

Secretary Darlene Gerick noted that this new millage wouldn't start until the end of 2023.

(continued on page 3)



As a life-long resident of Van Buren Township, Albert Harris built a home on a part of the family homestead where he and his bride Frances Mae raised five children: Suzanne, Allen, Kathleen, Cindy and Nancy.

DDA tells background of Harris Park to mark Black History Month

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

At the March 2 meeting of the Van Buren Township Board of Trustees, via Zoom, a presentation on Harris Park was made to mark Black History Month.

Supervisor Kevin McNamara apologized for being two days late, since Black History Month was in February.

Susan Ireland, executive director of the Van Buren Township Downtown Development Authority, showed pictures donated by the Harris family that illustrated the history of the Harris Park site.

Albert Raymond Harris, who served on the DDA since its beginning and was well-known in the community, was born in Van Buren Township on June 4, 1912 and died

Feb. 11, 2002. He was preceded in death by nine brothers and sisters.

George and Rose Harris had moved to VBT in 1900 and built a home, which is now the real estate office at 10145 Belleville Rd. The Harris family was among the first black families in the township.

Albert built a house behind the original house and he and his wife Frances raised their five children there. That house was razed and rebuilt to make the new office of the DDA to resemble the original house and the site of Harris Park.

He established "Grandpa's Toys" and was known for making wooden toys in his workshop and giving them to children. For years he brought many boxes of home-

(continued on page 3)

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SECOND FRONT PAGE

VBPS

(continued from page 1)

Also at Monday's regular meeting, the board:

- Informally agreed to have the next board meeting on March 22 as an in-person meeting, if all the details can be worked out. New state guidelines allow 25 individuals at a meeting, but there is another guideline for entertainment areas for 50% and the BHS Commons might be considered an entertainment area. Then, there is the auditorium or the mini auditorium. "We're looking for clarification," Kudlak said, noting the goal has been for them to meet in person;

- Approved the resignation of Devin McCafferty, a non-instructional staff member at Belleville High School, with less than one year of service as of March 5 for a job opportunity;

- Approved employing the follow non-instructional staff members: Jessica Kaba as part-time secretary at Rawsonville Elementary, as of Feb. 22; Shahna Currie as guidance counselor at BHS as of March 15; and Kyle Price for maintenance in Plant Operations as of March 15; and

- Discussed the Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan as required by the state every 30 days. They also reconfirmed how instruction will be delivered for each grade level during the 2020-21 school year as either in-person or remote learning. Kudlak said the district has been offering in-person learning right along. Director of Instruction Jeff Moore stated the figures in his report for the two-way interaction between teachers and students were for January and they should have been for February, but its been 96 to 97% right along. He said he will check his figures;

- Heard Karen Johnston, director of special services, ask for help with getting transportation for special education and homeless students living elsewhere, who are transported individually. She said they had transported using a cab but the company they used is unable to get drivers. She said they did not want to use Uber or Lift because they want to know who the driver is every day. President Pearce suggested checking with Metro Cars at the airport, since there is not so much airport traffic now;

- Heard Director Moore report that he and Jim Williams, director of plant operations, are looking into special building space for a STEM Learning Lab for K-8. "We are doing some visioning on what kind of place that should be," Moore said. He said they will keep meeting and then go to the architect to help design those spaces;

- Heard Director Williams report he is updating the work orders system and the roof is on the two south sections of the Early Childhood Development Center

construction. He said concrete will come in the next week or so and more roofing is coming shortly;

- Heard Human Resources Director Abdul Madyun report that a lot of the staff is receiving hazard pay from the state. The district was the middle man and collected applications from the staff and uploaded them to the state in November and December. "We are being inundated with calls from the staff asking 'Where's my check?'" he said. "That's been my life for the last few days," he said, adding he has been trying to verify applications; and

- Went into closed-door session to consider pending litigation and took no action after going back into regular session only to adjourn.

Harris

(continued from page 1)

made wooden toys to donate to the Toys for Tots Christmas project at the *Independent*.

Ireland said Albert Harris was in the U.S. Navy and served in the Seabees (construction battalion) in World War II. He served on Guadalcanal. He was among over 1,000 black Seabees who went on a hunger strike March 2-3, 1945 to bring attention to a black issue. They continued to do their assignments but didn't eat for two days. Ireland said this began his support for black rights.

Treasurer Sharry Budd said Harris, a builder, did all the cement work at her house and showed her youngest son how to lay cement. Harris was close with her father-in-law and they used to sit together and tell their stories.

She said Harris' wife Frances worked in the clinic in Sumpter Township. Her garden with herbs and unusual plants was lovingly tended.

Harris was the recipient of the 1997 Belleville Area Chamber of Commerce Ted Kuckelman Community Service Award and served as the Grand Marshal in the Strawberry Festival parade.

A display telling the story of the Harris family is being put together for inside the DDA headquarters. The DDA also is looking into getting a display outside in the park, as well.

In 2020, the Michigan Downtown Association recognized Harris Park as the Best Placemaking Project in the state.

The DDA decided to preserve the legacy of the Harris family and its homestead by creating a public place for people to gather. Harris Park is an urban park in the VBT business district, just south of Aldi's.



Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, D-MI, spent Saturday visiting vaccination sites in Ypsilanti, Dearborn, and Taylor. At each site, she spoke with health officials, providers, and people receiving vaccines to thank them for their courage and listen to their experiences. "Watching our neighbors receive vaccine doses in Ypsilanti, Dearborn, and Taylor brought me immense joy and hope for brighter days ahead," said Congresswoman Dingell. "All of us have lost loved ones and friends to this pandemic, but with increased vaccine supplies we can save lives and keep our most vulnerable workers and families healthy and safe. Even as we begin to feel optimism in our path ahead, we will only bring an end to this pandemic if we remain vigilant by wearing our masks, keeping our distance, and listening to the experts." Dingell toured vaccination sites at Eastern Michigan University, Ford Community & Performing Arts Center, and Wayne County Community College.

Court Watching:

Live preliminary exam set April 26 for Bailey's four murder charges

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

A live preliminary exam for Raymond Lee Bailey has been scheduled for 9 a.m., April 26, before Judge Lisa Martin in 34th District Court.

Bailey, 37, of Wyandotte, is charged with eight felony charges in the murders of four victims in a home on Martinsville Road in Sumpter Township on Aug. 15.

Bailey has been held without bond in the Wayne County Jail since his arraignment on Aug. 19. He faces four counts of first degree, premeditated murder, and four counts of felony firearm.

Bailey was before Judge Martin via Zoom from the jail on Feb. 24 and his attorney Sharon Clark Woodside asked for adjournment of the probable cause conference until she can get the report from the independent evaluation. She said he already had the forensic interview and they are just waiting for the written report.

The prosecution already had a forensic exam that found him competent to stand trial and competent for criminal responsibility, noting he does not meet the defense of insanity. The defense attorney

stipulated to competency to stand trial, but disputed the report that said he is criminally responsible. She sought the independent evaluation.

But Prosecutor Tara Hindelang asked that an exam date be set, since the question of criminal responsibility is for the trier of fact – circuit court.

Judge Martin set the exam as requested.

Judge Martin asked how many witnesses the prosecutor will call and Hindelang replied it will be eight or could be less. Attorney Woodside said she will call no witnesses.

Bailey is charged with the shooting deaths of sisters Laura Tanner, 35, and Sarah Grupa, 38, and their cousins, brothers Forrest Sampson, 28, and Neil Sampson, 30. Laura Tanner was Bailey's former fiancé and the murders took place at her home.

Donte Marki Stenson

Donte Marki Stenson, 29, of Van Buren Township was due to be present by Zoom before Judge Tina Brooks Green for his preliminary exam on Feb. 17. It had been scheduled for a live exam, but a few days

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OPINIONS

Editorial

We've got to have order in the court

This COVID pandemic has changed so many things drastically. One of the procedures changed is how to get justice.

The 34th District Court has stepped up to the bar and put in place procedures for getting your day in court via Zoom. It's a difficult procedure for some people and a snap for others. It depends on if you are good with a computer. The defendants have done better than many attorneys in that area.

One of the things that has popped up is that people who look into their cell phone or tablet to see justice don't feel like they are in a courtroom.

For example, one defendant was in bed and putting on his shirt when he entered Judge Green's Zoom courtroom. She scolded him and he got out of bed.

Another defendant was in bed with a woman next to him who was briefly shown in the Zoom courtroom. Judge Martin admonished him.

Yet another defendant came bare-chested to court and slowly put on a pullover shirt as he talked to the judge.

Then there are those who leave their hats on when talking to the judge. In a real courtroom the bailiff will make sure you take off your hat.

Is it possible to have order in a Zoom courtroom? The judges in many cases are spelling out your future. They set fines and bonds and make decisions that could affect your freedom. They deserve respect and should get it as best you can give it through your cellphone.

EXTRA THINGS I KNOW

...By Rosemary K. Otzman

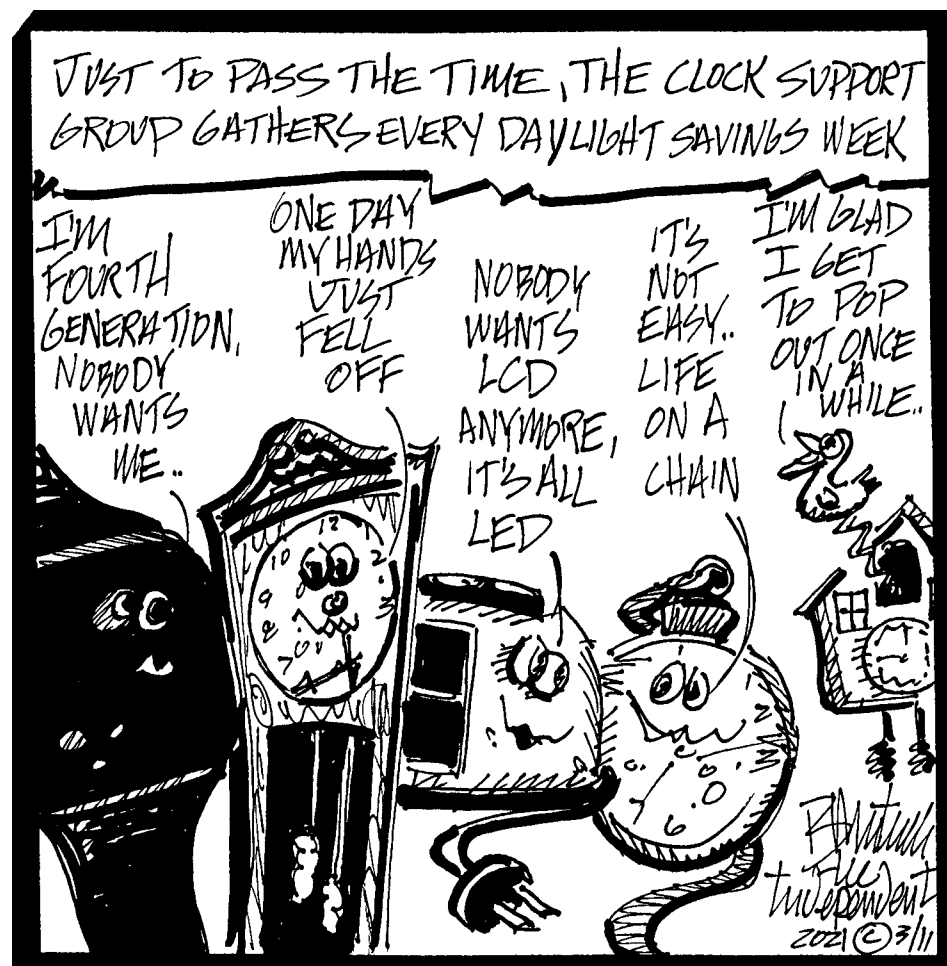
Van Buren Public Schools Financial Director Sara Cortese dropped us a line last Thursday: "I saw in the paper that there was a question about administrators at the district. I think there was just some confusion about our job titles we have on our report. I wanted to clarify that on our list we had several people listed as 'Non-Affiliated'. That just means that they are not represented by any of the union groups. All of the people with that job title on our report were listed under the "Administrators" section in the paper, but they are not administrators. For example, Corea Nimmons was listed on our report under Non-Affiliated but was in the paper as an Administrator -- she was our payroll clerk, not an administrator.

"We currently have 6 non-union administrators, 9 principals, and 6 assistant principals for total of 21 administrators out of the 651 employees that were paid in 2020."

Thank you for the clarification. It's not the one administrator to every 15 employees our reader counted. It's more like one administrator to every 31 employees.

We appreciate you straightening us out and apologize for not asking you before publishing his question.

My brother Tony, who will celebrate his 90th birthday on April 18, ran into a man at a restaurant in Florida recently and the man said his mother graduated from Belleville High School, but he was unsure what year it was and could have been 1945 or 1946. Tony said the man felt bad because he didn't know. He assured the man his sister could find out.



Meanwhile Tony went through his yearbooks for 1947, '48, and '49 and she wasn't in any of them.

I went to the school administration building and Debbie McWilliams said they didn't have the yearbooks for 1945 or '46 in the office, so she went over to the high school and looked there. They didn't have them either. She looked in the composites on the wall at BHS and couldn't find anything.

The missing woman is Adriene DeBacker, whose married name was Moellering (1926-1913). She had two sisters, Madeline and Germaine. They all have passed on.

I consulted with the district library and they said they have yearbooks from 1925, '27, '30, '47, '49 through '51, '53 through '68, '71 and '72, and '74 through 2018. Later they received a copy of the 1928 yearbook, as well.

I then asked Charity Fielder if she could help. She is taking care of business at the Belleville Area Museum while it is closed. She looked into the yearbooks there and found no yearbooks for '45 or '46. She did find a piece of paper tucked into the yearbooks that said BHS did not publish yearbooks in '45 or '46. That's a new one on me.

Could it be because of shortages caused by World War II?

I finally checked AlumniClass.com and found Adriene De Backer Moellering, Class of 1944. Now we'll have to check

if there are any yearbooks for '44. Her son would like a copy of her graduation picture, I'm sure.

One of our readers in Van Buren Township said she just got a Christmas card from her cousin in Dearborn. It was mailed Dec. 15.

A Sumpter resident called to say he received in the mail a request for an absentee ballot form for the May 4 election. He said he didn't know Sumpter was having an election, so he called his friends and they didn't know anything about it. He said he called township hall and the lady he talked to didn't know anything about it, either. So, he called me.

I called Sumpter and was told the Monroe Intermediate School District has a question on the May 4 ballot. Those Sumpter residents in the Airport Community Schools will consider the renewal of a technology millage of .9866 mill for five years.

It started with one mill countywide in 1997 and a slightly reduced millage has been approved every five years since then.

Van Buren Township and the city of Belleville told me they have nothing on the May 4 ballot.



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Letters

Vote for *Independent* to get back issues online

To the editor:

The Belleville Area District Library has nominated the *Belleville Area Independent* for a Digital Michigan Newspaper grant, and we've been selected as finalists! The grant is provided through the Clarke Historical Library of Central Michigan University, and would cover the costs to scan and host online back issues of the *Independent* we currently possess on microfilm: papers from 1995 through 2019.

This part of our community's history would be searchable at the click of a button and available to anyone with an Internet connection -- all around the world.

Only one winner will be chosen from the four selected finalists. In order for us to win, we need the community to **vote!** There are two ways to do it:

1. By Michigan picture postcard

- Postcards must be postmarked no earlier than March 15 and no later than March 21, 2021.

- They should include the name of the paper nominated -- *Belleville Area Independent*.

- Postcards should be mailed to: Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

Postcards will be available for pickup from the Library during the mail-in voting period. Cast your vote and help us bring a part of our community history online!

2. By Twitter

- Voting via Twitter will take place between March 22 and 28 using the hashtag #DigBelleville.

- Please watch our website and Facebook page for more detailed instructions.

Thank you,
Mary Jo Suchy, Director
Belleville Area District Library

Thank you *Independent*, VBT for the information

To the editor:

I wanted to thank you and the *Independent* for posting the notice about Covid-19 vaccination registration occurring through Van Buren Township office. My husband, his twin brother and I are all going to Taylor WCCC for our vaccinations tomorrow [March 9]. We've signed up everywhere, gone around in circles, and this is the first opportunity for us. So, thank you.

At the same time, I saw a notice on the city's website about someone posing as a DTE employee in the Taylor area and stealing from people's homes. I'm including the link to the site for passing along to our community's readers.

<http://www.taylorsportsplex.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1161>

Thank you again and thanks to the Van Buren Township officials who were involved in letting us know about the vaccinations.

Barbara Zysk-Berman
Sumpter Township

Will second ordinance officer solve problem?

To the editor:

Many people need help in cleaning up their properties. It's not always because they don't want to. It could be a variety of reasons, such as being elderly, health restrictions, economics, etc. This is our township. We need to help those who cannot help themselves. We could work better together as opposed to separately.

One way to help and clean up the blight and trash is to network with our environmental businesses such as Waste Management and others that already have established routes in our township. To work out a workable plan for those companies and our township, we could possibly use channel 12 which has already cost thousands of dollars to establish, and which is located in the municipal building. We must use our creative minds to make this happen.

On Sumpter Township, MI, web site agenda items for the week of 3/8/2021 they talk about hiring a second ordinance officer at over \$50,000+ yearly. That's questionable when the current one making almost \$60,000+ is allegedly not performing his responsibilities.

If true, employ someone that will do the job and not use the Sumpter Police Department allegedly as his or her crutch. I'm a witness to such behavior as Peter Gregory came to my home with Det. Sgt. Toth on Feb. 25 and Feb. 26 and left two yellow tags telling me to tell him where the blight could be found. I call this action intimidation.

I'm left curious why would a Det. Sgt. making in excess of \$146,000 per year be baby-sitting for the township ordinance officer? To the citizens of our township: If you see wrong-doing tell somebody and report it to the State Police, Sheriff Dept., Civil Rights, FBI or the ACLU. There are plenty of lawyers who will work pro-bono, meaning after the law suit is settled they get paid.

To the tax payers: If this second ordinance officer is employed, the tax payers would be paying a whopping \$110,000+. Where is our Sumpter Township, MI, Board of Trustees that is tasked with fiduciary duties? (Which means having trust and confidence.) In this case it seems it would be spending our tax dollars recklessly.

I'm a retired lieutenant from the Michigan Department of Corrections after many years. What I used in supervision was progressive action to get compliance both from staff and prisoners. It was never out of fear, punitive or vindictiveness, as I've notice here in Sumpter Township. Your vote does count. Board meetings are the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6 p.m. Consult your Sumpter Township web site.

Ronald Barrington Robinson
Sumpter Township, Michigan
Elected Precinct Delegate

One Call Does It All . . .

. . . At the Independent

699-9020

More Letters

Rawsonville Woods thanks Food Gatherers

To the editor:

The residents of Rawsonville Woods community would like to thank Elizabeth Shepard and the volunteers. They organize and distribute the food rescue program, Food Gatherers, once a month.

Rawsonville Woods residents

Editor's Note: The Food Gatherers distribute food to anybody who comes from 3 to 4 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month in Rawsonville Woods. There are about 75 families attending the Rawsonville Woods program at 10825 Rawsonville Rd., Sumpter Township, (734) 461-6700.

Another Food Gatherers program is on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at Van Buren Estates, 16800 Lohr Rd., Van Buren Township, (734) 697-4655.

Food Gatherers is based in Ann Arbor.

Thank you, St. Jude

To the editor:

I want to thank St. Jude for answering my prayers. Please continue to publish this prayer. It does work.

Thank you, C.P.

St. Jude's Novena

May the sacred heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us. St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, keeper of the hopeless, pray for us.

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Obituaries



Eileen M. Graham

EILEEN M. GRAHAM

(July 28, 1938 - March 5, 2021)

Eileen M. Graham, age 82, long-time Belleville resident, passed away Friday, March 5, 2021, after a short battle with cancer, at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Ypsilanti, MI, surrounded by her family. She was born July 28, 1938 in Northampton, Massachusetts, daughter of John G. & Susan (Corash) Zuroff.

She is a graduate of Belleville High School, class of 1956. She attended Cleary College. She was a secretary at the University of Michigan Law College and Beyer Hospital for many years. Mrs. Graham was a member of the Van Buren Eagles Aerie #3996. She enjoyed playing Bunco and Pinnacle for many years. Eileen was an avid reader and loved animals, especially cats.

Mrs. Graham is survived by her devoted husband of 58 years, James E. Graham; son Scott (Karen) Graham of Allen Park, MI; daughter Pam (Greg) Courts of Heber City, Utah; 3 grandsons: Brandon Graham of Houston, Missouri, Ross Berquist of Cincinnati, Ohio and Austin Graham of Allen Park, MI; great-granddaughter Lily Graham of Houston, Missouri; sister Jackie (Harold) Clayton of Summerville, South Carolina; numerous nieces and nephews in the United States and Canada; also numerous extended family and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, also two sisters Florence Beattie and Ruth Krarup.

Visitation and funeral service was Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at David C. Brown Funeral Home, 460 E. Huron River Dr., Belleville, MI 48111 (734) 697-4500. Due to COVID-19, there was a limit of 25 people and face coverings were required. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are encouraged to Friends of Michigan Animal Rescue.

COVID-19 death total in 48111 remains at 60, positive tests at 2,224

The number of people who have died from COVID-19 in the 48111 zip code remained at 60 over the week ending Monday, March 8.

The positive tests for COVID-19 in 48111 were 2,224 on Monday, March 8, up from 2,197 the previous Monday, March 1.

On Monday, March 8, the separate numbers released by the Wayne County Health Department for the tri-community were: Van Buren Township, 1,453 positive cases, 32 deaths; City of Belleville, 386 positive cases, 21 deaths; and Sumpter Township 385 positive cases, 7 deaths.

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start in your own community*



Johnny Vawters, Jr.

JOHNNY VAWTERS, JR.

(April 8, 1937 - February 27, 2021)

Johnny Vawters, Jr., was born to the union of Mary Simmons and Johnny Vawters, Sr., in Demopolis, Alabama, on April 8, 1937. He was raised by his paternal grandparents, Catherine Vawters Cooper and Ulysses Cooper in Shortleaf, Alabama.

During Johnny's educational years, he attended the Marengo County Schools and graduated from Demopolis High School. While in high school Johnny played baseball and football, until he broke his leg which ended his athletic ambitions. He loved all sports, but especially baseball.

Johnny had many interests. Along with his love for politics, Johnny also loved classic movies. Westerns were his favorite. He loved to read and learn about history, especially Black history. He loved nature documentaries and animal videos on YouTube. He loved to sing. He would randomly burst into song. But most of all he loved his friends and family.

Johnny accepted Christ early on in his life. He was the founding deacon of the True Gospel Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio. His son Quintin Vawters is currently the presiding pastor. Johnny formed singing groups in Cleveland, Ohio, and was one of the founding members of the gospel group Trojans of Joy. Johnny sang and also played the guitar.

In 1958, while in Cleveland, Ohio, Johnny married and six children were born out of that union: Johnny Vawters III, Veronica, Harvey, Catherine, Quintin, and Samuel.

Johnny then moved to Detroit, Michigan, during the Detroit 1967 riots. Johnny married again and four children were born out of that union: Vertona, Felicia, Mary, and Charles.

While in Michigan, Johnny held many occupations. His first job was at the Fruehauf Trailer Corporation. In 1969, Johnny was hired at Ford Motor Co. as an assembly worker. In 1978, Johnny was elected president of the Dearborn Assembly Plant. From there he held many other positions including recording secretary of Local 600 and first vice president of the Local 600.

While working at UAW Local 600, he met Pamela Walker. They were married in 1991. He and Pam settled in Sumpter Township the same year. Johnny retired from UAW Local 600 in 2004. Two months later Johnny was elected supervisor of Sumpter Township. He worked there for 10 years before he ultimately retired for good in 2014.

Johnny is survived by his wife Pamela and children: Johnny Vawters (Hilda), Veronica Vawters-Suber (Aaron), Catherine Thomas Vawters, Quintin Vawters, Samuel Vawters (Tiffany), Vertona Vawters, Felicia Vawters, Mary Vawters, Charles Vawters, Brittney Vawters, 23 grandchildren; and 15 great-grandchildren and his brother Ulysses Vawters (Margaret).

He was preceded in death by his mother and father and stepdaughter Kehia Walker. Arrangements by O.H. Pye, III Funeral Home, Detroit. www.pyefuneralhome.com

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March 11 – Michael Ackron, Megan Fowler
 March 13 – Rhonda Cerone
 March 14 -- Robert Griffin, Anthony Bostic, Loren Roderick
 March 18 – Walt Rochowiak
 March 20 -- Viola Tomkiewicz

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Tyrell Wheeler named to Saginaw State Univ. Fall 2020 Dean's List

UNIVERSITY CENTER, MI – Tyrell Wheeler of Belleville has been named to the Fall 2020 semester Deans' List for academic excellence at Saginaw Valley State University.

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VBT board members consider ways to fix Haggerty Sub sidewalks

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

There are sidewalks in Haggerty Subdivision in Van Buren Township that are being pushed up by tree roots and otherwise deteriorating and VBT Supervisor Kevin McNamara wants to get those sidewalks repaired – but he's not sure how to do it.

He brought several options to the township board at its regular meeting, via Zoom, on March 2.

Supervisor McNamara said that over the last four years he has had weekly calls

complaining about the bad sidewalks in Haggerty Sub. (legal name Van Buren Estates).

He said he wanted to discuss a couple of different kinds of programs to present to property owners to see if they want them. He said the houses were originally \$80,000 to \$90,000 and now are selling for \$125,000.

Matthew Best, director of public services, said the township has some liability in this. He said in 1990 there was a slip and fall in Redford Township and the court found the township was not liable. Then there was a slip and fall in Canton Township and that case was put together with the closed Redford case and the Michigan Supreme Court said the townships had liability of 50% on non-maintained sidewalks and the property owners had 50%.

Director Best said they have been working on this for six months and have created a pilot program based on Haggerty Sub, created in 1970-74, where there are 716 lots and the homes are now selling for \$150,000 to \$165,000. They were originally \$80,000 to \$90,000, said Supervisor McNamara.

Best said the study showed at least 40% of the sidewalks need to be replaced. They could get grants for low income property owners and they have to make sure the ordinance reflects the private ownership of

the sidewalks.

They could use inhouse staff or consultants to run the program. They would notify property owners of sidewalks that need replacement. People could replace their own sidewalks or go with the township contractor, which would probably be cheaper.

Since about 40% need replacement, that is estimated at \$700,000, plus other costs, and the total would be \$1,128,500 for a consultant led program.

If they have the work done in-house they would save \$90,000, Best said, but employees would be pulled away from their duties and trained, plus a vehicle might have to be purchased.

He said it could be done in four phases over four years, with each phase \$500,000 for consultants or \$400,000 for in-house.

Best said the average cost per property owner would be \$1,160, according to estimates. He said the township would have to provide some upfront capital outlay.

He said this figure does not include driveway approaches and damaged sprinklers or tiles. People could be invoiced for the cost of the sidewalk and pay it outright or put it on their tax bill.

Trustee Sherry Frazier asked how long would the people have to pay the money.

"We get 2-3% interest on money parked in our bank accounts," McNamara said. "We could lend money and get it back in five years."

Trustee Reggie Miller asked if someone newly bought a house there and a tree had damaged the sidewalk are the new owners liable? She was told yes.

McNamara said he wanted to find out what people thought, so he called people in knew in Haggerty Sub and they thought the \$1,600 was OK.

He said there is a special assessment district option where the whole thing would be bonded out and each property owner would be taxed equally. It could be for ten years at \$200 a year, he said.

Treasurer Sharry Budd said if they set up a SAD they have to have at least 51% of the people agreeing, so they have to get someone to go out and canvas the neighborhood to make sure there is

support. She asked if other neighborhoods needed help with sidewalks.

Best said there is a limitation for this type of program with the pilot information. He said they are limited to sidewalks adjacent to county roads. He said site condos are not eligible.

Treasurer Budd said the biggest area is Haggerty Sub and the Homeowners Associations take care of their own.

"My problem with SAD is what about homeowners whose sidewalks are fine?" asked Trustee Kevin Martin. "What are trees? Those trees are going to die and the homeowner has to pay for removal."

Supervisor McNamara said if he didn't get so many complaints about trees and the sidewalks, the board wouldn't be seeing this proposal.

"Other communities have done this," he said.

Best said in Canton Township they had a program similar to this where there were a lot of damaged sidewalks. He said they did all five phases in Glengarry Sub. In one bid and saved a ton of money.

"What do you want me to do, if anything?" McNamara asked the board. He said unfortunately they don't have a homeowners association. He said he called the people he knows, but that is not fair or scientific.

McNamara said they could take the \$1.1 million cost and put flyers together and put out in Haggerty Sub. They could propose five years or form a SAD and over ten years as a bond.

Treasurer Budd said the last SAD the township did was set up by lot and a 300-foot lot was the same as any other.

"What if people replaced their sidewalks already?" she asked. Budd said she walked Haggerty Sub and ended up on her face because she wasn't watching where she was stepping.

"I'd like to hear from the residents," said Trustee Miller. "We're not in a big hurry to vote on this... Put out a notice."

"And tell them what?" McNamara asked.

"This is very complex," said Trustee Don Boynton. "It's hard to have everyone do the same thing... Hear what they have

(continued on page 15)

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The 'Equality Act' and what it means for you

By Wayde Hoppe
Van Buren Township

The U.S. Senate will soon consider the "Equality Act." It is intended to prevent discrimination against people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity and makes them a protected class under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This bill applies to any establishment that provides a good, service or program, public or private. There are plenty of reasons

to care about this bill and, as they say, the devil is in the details.

A portion of the text reads, "An individual shall not be denied access to a shared facility, including a restroom, a locker room and a dressing room, that is in accordance with the individual's gender identity." In other words, a person is never to be denied access to any public facility based on his or her own perceived gender.

Biological males would have access to facilities, services and jobs typically reserved for biological females including the following: battered women's shelters, women's homeless shelters, women's locker and shower rooms, women's toilet rooms, women's dressing rooms, positions on female athletic teams, college scholarships for women, set-aside loans for women owned businesses, female prisons, TSA agents that conduct pat-downs on women, and all school and college facilities designated for females.

The bill would force every business and public entity to endorse (and in some cases participate in) such behavior including: mandatory preferred pronoun use, a nation-wide ban on conversion therapy, forced participation in same-sex weddings, endorsements in school sex-education materials, and sex change conversion for children without parental consent.

The bill equates abortion to pregnancy while prohibiting "pregnancy discrimination," making it illegal for health-care professionals to refuse to

participate in abortion.

This bill is especially troublesome for religiously operated institutions because it prohibits employment decisions based on sex or sexual behaviors. Failure to comply with the bill would likely result in the loss of tax-exempt status and in the case of private colleges, loss of accreditation.

Privately operated businesses that have religious convictions, would fare no better if they refuse, probably losing their license to conduct business. And the bill specifically prohibits exemption claims due to sincerely held religious beliefs: the first amendment is no defense.

Physicians would be required to provide mastectomies and hysterectomies on physically healthy women and amputations of healthy male sex organs. Conscientious objections would be met with fines, job loss and probably loss of a medical license.

Faith-based organizations, such as adoption agencies, would no longer be eligible for a waiver and would be required to submit or go out of business.

This bill will also stretch our cultural acceptance of dress codes and public nudity when applied to beaches, public pools, public places or places of public accommodation.

This bill is problematic on many levels. Why create a bill that antagonizes the religious community and then prevents them from claiming a first-amendment defense? At least three major religions in our country have very strong commitments to sexual mores and both the laity and the clergy are likely to resist.

The constitution guarantees the freedoms of speech, association and religion. Why write a bill that gives preference to a legislative act over enumerated constitutional rights? Those who have a strongly held religious conviction would suffer the most from this bill. The hostility toward religion seems conspicuous.

Women have made great strides in this country. Why jettison their gains, including privacy rights, in order to advance transgender interests? And why jeopardize women and children?

This is clearly an instance when the government is favoring a viewpoint that

differs from many of its citizens. And this is exactly why the constitution protects speech, association and religion. After all, only dis-favored speech, associations and religion need to be protected.

If passed, it seems likely that the courts will be filled with contests for years to come, trying to resolve the innumerable conflicts created by this piece of legislation. Congress may have been trying to resolve a real problem or they may have just been trying to dismantle long held sexual mores. But they are going to generate legal troubles for a multitude of American citizens who are not vindictive, but will be punished nonetheless. It is also troubling to think of the way this bill will adversely affect women and children

It may be time to revisit the Civil Rights Act which will now be used by the government to silence dissenting views.

Things to do in the Belleville area...

• **Tuesday, March 16** – Forgotten Harvest Free Food Give Away runs from 2 to 4:30 p.m., or while supplies last, every Tuesday at Van Buren Township Hall, 46425 Tyler Rd. Volunteers will load fresh groceries into the vehicle of anyone in need.

• **Tuesday, March 16** – Forgotten Harvest Food Give Away at noon every Tuesday until further notice at Romulus High School, 9650 S. Wayne Rd. Sponsored by Wayne County Executive Warren C. Evans and hosted by Romulus Community School District. Information: Virginia Williams, (734) 673-8396

• **Wednesday, March 17** – St. Patrick's Day Dinner at Van Buren Eagles #3996, 9961 Beck Rd., Van Buren Township. From 5 to 8 p.m., or until gone. Cost \$15. Menu: Corned beef, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, rutabagas, bread & butter.

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Willis Feed Mill has gone to the birds. Chicks, that is. The annual arrival of spring chicks is here at the Mill, located along the railroad tracks behind Boneheads BBQ off Willis Road in the village of Willis. See their Facebook page details. WFM has a huge selection of Michigan-made products including dog and cat food, wild bird feed,

certified organic products, hay, straw, poultry feed, horse and livestock feed. They're open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. They can have your order ready for pick up and owner Bob Durham will even load it up for you. See their ad in today's paper and call (734) 461-1111.

Mary Ellen Nail Boutique in the Davenport Plaza on East Columbia Avenue is celebrating spring with March Specials in the full-service spa. This includes massages with facials, starting at \$70, and

a new-client massage for only \$49. Owner Patty Diorio and staff are also offering 20% off lash extensions. Social guidelines are in place. They're open Tuesday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Saturdays, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. See their ad in today's paper and visit them on Facebook and at www.maryellennailboutique.com. Gift certificates and appointments are available at (734) 391-8057.

Denny's Salon and Hott Hair Salon on Main Street near 5-Points, is offering St. Patty's Day Specials on haircuts and styling for \$12.95 with their ad coupon in today's paper, along with lash extensions for just \$59.99 with their other coupon. Walk-ins are available and appointments can be made at (734) 697-4485. Masks are required. Visit them on Facebook, too.

Atchinson Ford will be holding a Tech Tour on Tuesday, March 23, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the dealership on Belleville Road. The free, show-room event is accepting registrations in advance online and by phone only, no walk-ins. Ford Motor Company will have tech demo specialists on hand to cover vehicles such as the Bronco Sport, Mustang Mach-E, and the F-150. Social distancing guidelines and masks will be required and sessions will be limited to 20 participants per hour. Enjoy food, beverages, and other giveaways. Call (734) 697-9161 to register or go online at Atchinsonford.net.

Pet Photos with the Easter Bunny are coming to Feed-rite Pet Store on Belleville Road on Saturday, March 27, from noon until 4 p.m., sponsored by the Buster Foundation of Van Buren Township. Photos are \$10 each and come with a card, with the proceeds going to the foundation. Be sure to check out the Buster merchandise, too. Masks and social distance guidelines will be in place.

Thank you to Faith Assembly Church on East Huron River Drive and Ridge Road Church of Christ on Ridge Road in Ypsilanti for renewing your ads with us in our church directory. Both churches offer in-person and online options. See their ads in today's paper for service times, etc.

State Rep. Puri invites students to join his Student Advisory Group

State Representative Ranjeev Puri, D-Canton, recently announced the creation of a new Student Advisory Group.

Citing the need for government to be more accessible to young people, State Rep. Puri hopes to provide young leaders with the opportunity to work directly with the Representative and other local leaders about the issues that matter most to them.

"I am so proud to represent a district full of active, engaged young individuals," said Rep. Puri. "During my campaign I had the honor to work closely with a number of students who brought great ideas to the table, and made me a better candidate

"The Student Advisory Group is a unique idea; we are hopeful it will create an environment to uplift the voice of a group that is often forgotten politically. Additionally, this is a great opportunity for our young citizens to interact with our office, meet other like-minded students, and gain a real life understanding of how our Legislature works."

The Council will meet virtually once per month with the goal of encouraging young leaders to develop leadership skills, make connections, and present and discuss new ideas with Rep. Puri. In-person meeting may start later in the year.

All young people, in grades 9-12, attending school in House District 21 (Canton, Van Buren Township or Belleville) are encouraged to apply, and applications will be accepted until March 15. The application can be completed online <http://bit.ly/StudentAdvisoryGroup>.

Read The Newspaper On The Web!

The Belleville-Area Independent Website is Online! Visit us @ bellevilleareaindependent.com

Charter Township of Van Buren Public Notice

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES MARCH 2, 2021 ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM

Supervisor McNamara called the meeting to order electronically via Zoom meeting ID: 981 1464 3645 at 6:00 p.m. Present: Supervisor McNamara, Treasurer Budd, Clerk Wright, Trustee Boynton, Trustee Frazier, Trustee Martin, and Trustee Miller. Others participating, facilitating and monitoring the meeting: Secretary Montgomery, Public Safety Deputy Director (Police Chief) Wright, Attorney Mannarino, Public Services Department Director Best, Developmental Services Director Power, Communication Specialist Nichols and a maximum audience of Twenty-One (21).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE AGENDA: Supervisor McNamara outlined the items appearing on the agenda.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Frazier moved; Boynton seconded to approve the agenda. Roll Call Vote. Yeas: McNamara, Budd, Wright, Boynton, Frazier, Martin, and Miller. Motion Carried.

ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA: Boynton moved, Budd seconded to approve the Consent Agenda: Board Meeting Minutes of February 16, 2021, Closed Session Minutes of February 16, 2021, Prepaid List of February 18, 2021, Prepaid List of February 25, 2021 and the Voucher List of March 2, 2021. Roll Call Vote. Yeas: McNamara, Budd, Wright, Boynton, Frazier, Martin, and Miller. Motion Carried.

PUBLIC HEARING: None.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E / ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRESENTATIONS: March 2, 2021 and March 3, 2021 between 9:00 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. residents of Van Buren Township, City of Belleville, Sumpter and Huron Township 65 and over have been scheduled for Covid-19 vaccinations at Wayne County Community College in Taylor. An additional 1000 vaccines are available next week for residents 65 and over, spouses of residents 65 and older, and caregiver who drive a 65 and over resident to their vaccination appointment. Sign up on the Township website at www.vanburen-mi.org. In honor of Black History Month DDA Director Ireland presented a tribute to the history of Harris Park noting original owner Albert Raymond Harris and his family who were known to be some of the first African American settlers in the Township. Mr. Harris was one of the first members of the Van Buren Township Downtown Development District and was well known for his toy making skills and community involvement. Noted the passing of Kurt Atchinson and Connie

Krebs. Announced the retirement of Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Wright after 24 years of service.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Unfinished and New Business): Resident was hopeful the Township would invest in converting street lights to LED and in additional lights on all streets. Representative from Dingell's office asked for clarification of the vaccine distribution. Thanked Congress woman Dingell's office for their assistance with vaccine distribution to residents.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Miller moved, Martin seconded to approve Resolution 2021-07 Agreement between the Township and Oakland County for I.T. Services. Roll Call Vote. Yeas: McNamara, Budd, Wright, Boynton, Frazier, Martin, and Miller. Motion Carried.

Wright moved, Boynton seconded to approve the first reading of Ordinance 03-02-21 (1) Local Littering Ordinance.

Roll Call Vote. Yeas: McNamara, Budd, Wright, Boynton, Frazier, Martin, Miller. Motion Carried.

Presentation and discussion on a sidewalk replacement program for Van Buren Estates, also known as Haggerty subdivision.

REPORTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT NON-AGENDA ITEMS: Resident commented about trees causing damage to the sidewalks noting if the sidewalks are repaired and the tree roots are not addressed the problem would return; noted A.D.A compliant crosswalks were not addressed in the replacement program presentation and offered to assist in any sidewalk replacement program. Director Best indicated further assessment would be needed if accessible sidewalks were considered and that the current sidewalks (non-accessible) are grandfathered in. Clerk Wright would like the Board to put together a letter to State Representatives to encourage strengthening of the laws regarding ethnic intimidation to encompass displaying a Ku Klux Klan flag. Trustee Martin suggested reviewing alternative meeting formats to avoid the freezing and unexpected drop of board members throughout Zoom meetings. Board members indicated that the Zoom platform is the best on the market with less issues than other platforms.

BOARD COMMENT NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

ADJOURNMENT: Boynton moved, Frazier seconded to adjourn at 7:49 p.m. Motion Carried.

Leon Wright, Township Clerk

Kevin McNamara, Supervisor

Published: March 11, 2021

Van Buren Public Schools Public Notice

VAN BUREN PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADVERTISEMENT FOR BID

Van Buren Public Schools will receive sealed bid proposals until **2:00 p.m. on March 25, 2021, for Marching Band Uniforms**. Bids will be opened and publicly read aloud immediately following the deadline for submission. Van Buren Public Schools will not consider or accept a bid received after the date and time specified for the bid submission.

Bid documents may be viewed and downloaded at: <https://www.vanburenschools.net/o/district/browse/102127>

Any questions, contact Sara Cortese at 734-697-1008 or scortese@vanburenschools.net.

Publish: March 11, 2021

INDEPENDENT CLASSIFIED ADS

AUCTION

PUBLIC AUCTION
U-Lock-It Self Storage LLC
6130 Rawsonville Rd.,
Belleville, MI 48111
(734)-482-1502

Notice is hereby given that on 3/11/21 at 12:00 P.M. thru 3/17/21 at 12:00 P.M. contents of the following storage unit(s) will be sold online at:

Bid13.com

SPACE #F77, Ashley Allen; #A17, Jennifer Burke; #129, Thomas Giraud; #C38, Stephanie Harbin; #F38, Laura Hart; #G39, Mario Holmes (Go Cart); #A35, Daejon Mickel; #A15, Dominick Murphy; #B32, Victoria Peter; #123, Samantha Siluk; #G34, Marcus Slater; #F7, Derek Thomas; #F9, Tanesha Wells; #G16, Cheryl Wingle

Unit(s) may or may not include the following: household items, recreational items, appliances, furniture, seasonal decorations, and tools.

Publish: March 11, 2021

FOR SALE

FOOD GRADE BARRELS – Various sizes & styles. Inventory & pictures at www.mattsbarrels.com Call/text (734) 474-5981. Located in Willis. 04/08

1999 R&R SNOWMOBILE ENCLOSED TRAILER, tilt. Newer axle, tires & LED lights. Original owner. \$1,250. Very good condition. (734) 635-2050 03/25

KENMORE GAS LAUNDRY CENTER. Large stainless steel tub & drum, 27” wide, 29” deep, 75” high, includes hoses. \$450. (734) 219-2601 leave message & phone#. 03/25

MANUFACTURED HOMES FOR SALE

NEW & USED HOMES in Belleville/Canton area. Family Communities: Holiday West (734) 461-9797 & Holiday Estates (734) 495-0500. Senior Community: Royal Holiday (734) 455-2666 04/15

FOR RENT

NEWLY REMODELED-PRIME LOCATION 2 or 3 room office space on Main Street. Gas included. (734) 355-5464 03/11

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ANY CONDITION OK
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313-402-0187 or 734-941-4595
\$

VEHICLE FOR SALE

2014 JEEP PATRIOT. California Car, 4-cyl., 5-speed, 2-wheel drive. No air. Immaculate inside & out. New tires. Private owner. \$4,850. (734) 695-0819 03/11

2001 TOYOTA SIENNA WAGON. 6-cyl, automatic, low miles. Clean car Private owner. (734) 695-0819 03/18

2009 CHEVROLET HHR WAGON. Sleek black finish. Automatic, full power, low miles. Private Owner. \$3,650. (734) 695-0819 03/25

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LOCAL HANDYMAN – SOME Jobs too LARGE – NO JOB too SMALL. LICENSED & REFERENCES. (734) 765-9224 TFN

LARRY’S HANDYMAN SERVICE. No job too small. Interior/exterior painting, hang wallpaper, powerwashing & carpentry. (618) 267-7774 10/07

WELDER AND GENERATOR REPAIR. Cables and terminals. Electric motor repair. Call Jerry (734) 941-5008 03/18

INTERIOR/EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE. Decluttering, cleaning, painting, roof and gutter cleaning & leaks, landscaping & window cleaning. (734) 796-3628 03/25

WANTED

H & W TOP DOLLAR \$
Cash For Salvage & Scrap Vehicles.
7 Days. Free Towing.
Licensed & Insured.
(734) 223-5581
(517) 605-6388

WANTED – ANY SIZE MEN’S JEANS for the homeless. Please drop off at Bladez’s 601 E. Huron River Drive. (734) 697-5600 TFN

WANTED – SMALL CONTAINERS of shampoo, toothpaste, etc. to take to homeless in Detroit. Drop off at Bladez’s 601 E. Huron River Dr. (734) 697-5600 TFN

TOP DOLLAR PAID FOR VEHICLES in good condition. Don’t trade it, sell it to me. (734) 695-0819 03/11

CASH PAID FOR Sports Cards and Comic Books. 50s, 60s, 70s. Private collector can come to you when it is safe to do so. (734) 697-3546 03/11

HELP WANTED

We are hiring a couple full time recruits to join our Construction team. We install mostly fencing, decking and brick paver projects. You will be a part of creating beautiful exterior features from start to finish. We remodel interiors of homes during the winter season. If you love being outdoors, have an aptitude for learning, and transportation, we can start you out at a minimum of \$14.00 to \$20.00 based on experience. This is just a starting pay, raises are doled out based on your mastery and retention of knowledge for our projects. We are a merit based pay company. There is nothing wrong with a laborious and creative job. No gym membership needed, and making the world a more beautiful place!

Check out some of our completed projects on Facebook page, Outdoor Amenities or www.outdooramenities.com, this what we do. For more info call me at 734.341.3364 Eric Partridge, owner/operator.

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 The Belleville-Area Independent will not be liable for failure to publish an ad as requested or for more than one incorrect insertion of an advertisement. In the event of any error or omission in printing or publication of an advertisement, you must notify us within five days of publication or on the date of insertion, if an ad is scheduled as part of a package, so there is time to correct subsequent publications. The Independent’s liability shall be limited to an adjustment for the cost of the space occupied by the error with a maximum liability being cancellation of the cost of the first incorrect advertisement or republication of the corrected advertisement. Under no circumstances shall the Independent be liable for consequential damages of any kind.

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE:

All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, or an intention, to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. The toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.



“I’d kill for a Nobel Peace Prize.”
 – Steven Wright

HELP WANTED

AREA TRAINEE for local Real Estate Firm. For appointment call (734) 697-1800 TFN

CAPTAIN NEMO’S. Apply within – 144 3rd Street. 04/01

HELP WANTED

Court watching

(continued from page 3)

earlier all parties agreed to make it Zoom.

Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Darrian Fortier explained the complaining witness failed to appear and she cannot proceed with the case. Defense attorney Henry Schneider of Neighborhood Defense Service made a motion to dismiss the case and Judge Green dismissed all charges and closed the case.

Stenson had been charged with assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder and domestic violence on Oct. 21 in Van Buren Township. His \$5,000 personal bond was contingent on no contact with the victim or the place of the alleged assault.

Prosecutor Fortier said the previous week the complaining witness said she needed a ride to court and they arranged for a taxi to bring her to court. Then when it was changed to a Zoom session, the victim said she could come.

Fortier said on Feb. 17 the victim did not arrive by Zoom so she called her number and her mother said she was on Zoom, but she wasn't. Fortier said the mother said she could talk to the victim directly and she waited and the line went blank. She said she called the victim over and over and got no answer. Then the victim advocate reached out and couldn't get through to her either.

Finally, the victim called the prosecutor and said she wasn't going forward.

Judge Green said these charges can be brought forward again. She told defendant Stenson it would be in his best interests if he moves on with his life and eliminates this toxic relationship from his life.

"Just a suggestion," Judge Green said.

Elijah Rashaad Favors

Elijah Rashaad Favors, 22, of Romulus was arraigned Feb. 17 by Judge Green and had his probable cause conference adjourned until March 3 at 34th District Court via Zoom before Judge Martin. Defense attorney Elizabeth Young requested the adjournment so she could get discovery.

At the March 3 hearing, Judge Martin set a live preliminary exam for 9 a.m., June 7. Judge Martin also noted that Favors needed to contact the court payment department since there were outstanding payments due of \$460.

Assistant Prosecutor Darrian Fortier said Favors has a new domestic violence case with the same victim and malicious destruction of property warrant coming, which she signed the previous weekend.

Judge Green said there also is another reckless driving and CCW case set for an exam on April 4. Prosecutor Fortier said there also is another case in Third Circuit Court that is now CCW. The domestic violence part of the case was dismissed when the victim wouldn't testify.

Favors is charged with assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder and domestic violence on Oct. 15 in Van Buren Township.

Arraignment on the charges was by Judge Green on Feb. 17 and she set his personal bond at \$10,000. He is to have no contact with the victim.

On Feb. 17, Fortier said she has concerns about the safety of the victim. Attorney Young said the victim does not want to go forward with the case.

Judge Green said the victim has a history of non-appearance for cases against Mr. Favors. The judge addressed the defendant: "Mr. Favors, you cannot have contact with this woman. If you have contact, it ends

up badly for you ... You are the one who would go to jail."

Judge Green said she was considering a tether but would give him the benefit of the doubt today. If he is in violation of the no-contact order, she could call a hearing and put him on a tether or put him in jail.

"NO CONTACT!" she emphasized and Favors replied, "Yes, your honor."

Keenan Deshon Black

Keenan Deshon Black, 41, of Taylor, had his probable cause conference adjourned until March 10 since his defense attorney Cheryl Quick said the bank documents she needs for discovery have yet to arrive.

Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Jane Gillis said Van Buren Township Officer William Bettendorf requested the documents from the bank and she has not heard back from him. She tried to text him, but he did not answer.

Prosecutor Gillis said that the bank is an international corporation, not a bank down the road.

Judge Green adjourned the case to give them time to get all the evidence.

Black is charged with embezzlement by an agent or trustee of from \$1,000 to \$20,000 on Jan. 3, 2020 in Van Buren Township. He is free on \$2,500 personal bond.

Joseph Donald Truskolaski

Joseph Donald Truskolaski, 35, of Wyandotte, was scheduled for his probable cause conference before Judge Green on Feb. 17. It was adjourned until 9 a.m. March 24.

He is charged with operating while intoxicated/impaired/controlled substance, 3rd offense, on Oct. 24 in Van Buren Township.

He is free after paying bond of \$2,000/10% and being fitted with an alcohol tether. His defense attorney is Kim Michon.

Amanda Marie Willard

Amanda Marie Willard, 35, of Milan, is spending 19 months to 14 years in the Huron Valley Complex for Women. She was present via Zoom at 34th District Court before Judge Green to face charges from Huron Township. Willard told Judge Green that she had been in custody since October.

Judge Green noted that Van Buren Township police also had several charges against Willard and if she pled guilty to interfering with a police officer, possessing narcotics paraphernalia, and possession of a controlled substance on May 21, 2020 the judge would credit her with time-served and close those cases. She had failed to appear for her court date on the Van Buren Township charges because she was already in prison.

Willard took advantage of that plea deal.

The charge left before Judge Green was for possession of narcotics in Huron Township on Feb. 28, 2020.

Sarah Ann Hall

Sarah Ann Hall, 32, formerly of Ludington and most recently of Van Buren Township, was arraigned on Feb. 22 on a misdemeanor charge of domestic violence on Feb. 20 in VBT. 34th District Court Chief Judge Oakley set her pretrial for 9:20 a.m. March 9 via Zoom.

Court-appointed attorney Royce Nunley told the judge his client was working full-time at the airport and has been in this area just a few weeks. She wishes to go back to Ludington where her three children are residing and then arrange another place to stay here to keep her job.

Judge Oakley ordered \$1,000 personal bond and told her there must be no contact at all with the complaining witness or the address on the South I-94 Service Drive. She said she needed to get some personal items and Judge Oakley authorized a one-time civil standby with VBT police.

Ejauna Donyell Johnson

Ejauna Donyell Johnson, 20, of Ypsilanti and formerly of VBT, was arraigned on Feb. 22 by Judge Oakley on a felony charge of assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder and a misdemeanor charge of domestic violence on Feb. 20 in VBT.

Judge Oakley set her probable cause conference for March 3. Attorney Nunley said she had been working full time until last week. He said Johnson is not a flight risk and is not a danger to the complaining witness.

Judge Oakley ordered \$5,000 personal bond and no contact with the complaining witness. "She does not exist for you," Judge Oakley said of the alleged victim.

Johnson said she had personal items at the address in Parkwood and Judge Oakley authorized a one-time civil standby with VBT police.

On March 3, Judge Martin set an in-person preliminary exam for 10 a.m., June 7. Johnson's attorney is now Natalie Phelps of the Neighborhood Defense Service.

Wade Riley Miles

On Feb. 24, Judge Martin adjourned the probable cause conference until March 10 for Wade Riley Miles, 32, of Sumpter Township. He is charged with assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder and domestic violence on Feb. 14 in Sumpter Township.

"Trust, but verify."

— Ronald Reagan



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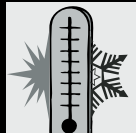
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Van Buren Township Police Dispatch Log

There were 257 dispatch calls reported by Van Buren Township police last week including the following.

Sunday, Feb. 28:
0218 – intrusion alarm, Lake Pointe Pass
0242 – suspicious person/vehicle, Oak Ln.
0305 – suspicious person/vehicle, Belleville Rd.
0311 – noise complaint, N. I-94 Service Dr.
0340 – larceny from auto, Oak Ln.
0646 – larceny from auto, S. I-94 Service Dr.
1018 – intrusion alarm, Anna Dr.
1050 – larceny from auto, S. I-94 Service Dr.
1115 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.
1127 – larceny, Belleville Rd.
1234 – larceny from auto, W. Archwood Dr.
1325 – suspicious person/vehicle, Rolan Meadows
1502 – breaking & entering, Hamilton St.
1622 – assist other dept., N. I-94 Service Dr.
1658 – noise complaint, Denton Rd.
1707 – operating while intoxicated, N. I-94 Service Dr./Quirk Rd.
1715 – personal injury accident, Belleville/Sunrise
1810 – abandoned auto, Parkwood Dr.
1926 – animal complaint, Rawsonville Rd. / S. I-94 Service Dr.
2053 – assist fire dept., Parkwood Dr.
2111 – suspicious person/vehicle, Parkwood Dr.
2148 – parking complaint, Belleville Rd.
2252 – trespassing, S. I-94 Service Dr.

Monday, March 1:
0028 – mental subject, Lake Point Blvd.
1125 – intrusion alarm, Martz Rd.
1257 – intrusion alarm, S. I-94 Service Dr.
1355 – fraud, Tyler Rd.
1355 – misc. complaint, Tyler Rd.
1400 – domestic, Ecorse Rd.
1422 – suspicious person/vehicle, Hannan Rd. / Van Born Rd.

1648 – threat, Parkwood Dr.
1744 – trespassing, Belleville Rd.
1926 – trespassing, Belleville Rd.
2104 – intrusion alarm, Belleville Rd.
2122 – juvenile complaint, Belleville Rd.
2157 – shooting, Meadows Cir.
2225 – intrusion alarm, Hull Rd.
2235 – suicidal person, Lohr Rd.
2353 – missing person, Brandi Dr.

Tuesday, March 2:
0034 – suspicious person/vehicle, Parkwood Dr.
0357 – suspicious person/vehicle, Belleville Rd.
0430 – assist other dept., Anna Dr./Ecorse Rd.
0641 – mental subject, Belleville Rd.
0719 – intrusion alarm, Owen St.
0832 – animal complaint, S. I-94 Service Dr.
1149 – suspicious person/vehicle, Pond Bluff Dr.
1150 – family trouble, Cedarhurst Dr.
1223 – fight, Belleville Rd.
1314 – assist other dept., Belleville Rd.
1551 – traffic offense, S. I-275/Ecorse
1630 – overdose, Hayes St.
1807 – larceny from auto, S. I-94 Service Dr.
1838 – intrusion alarm, S. I-94 Service Dr.
1914 – malicious destruction of property, Parkwood Dr.

2016 – 911 welfare check, Bemis Rd.
2040 – assist other dept., Denton Rd.

Wednesday, March 3:
0118 – assist other dept., S. I-94 Service Dr.
0133 – domestic, N. I-94 Service Dr.
0142 – mental subject, Belleville Rd.
0351 – assist other dept., Bemis Rd./Rawsonville
0751 – suspicious person/vehicle, Lake Villa Dr.
1005 – private property impound, Westlake Cir.
1039 – mental subject, Martz Rd.
1120 – assault & battery, Belleville Rd.
1122 – suspicious person/vehicle, Lake Pointe Blvd.
1410 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd. / Venetian Ave.
1710 – mental subject, Quirk Rd.
1715 – suspicious person/vehicle, Tyler Rd. / Rolan Meadows Dr.
1742 – threat, Parkwood
1857 – robbery, Parkwood Dr.
1916 – assist other dept., N. I-94 Service Dr.
2116 – domestic, Colonial Rd.
2134 – 911 welfare check, Colonial Rd.
2208 – domestic, Oak Ln.
2219 – mental subject, Outer Dr.
2240 – civil matter, Chatsworth Dr.

2245 – suspicious person/vehicle, Belleville
2352 – family trouble, McKinley St.
Thursday, March 4:
0757 – noise complaint, N. I-94 Service Dr.
0938 – suspicious person/vehicle, Village Green
1204 – domestic, S. I-94 Service Dr.
1243 – suspicious person/vehicle, S. I-94 Service
1309 – suicidal person, W. Huron River Dr.
1433 – parking complaint, Vine St.
1543 – suspicious person/vehicle, Martz Rd.
1611 – suspicious person/vehicle, Packard St.
1614 – domestic, N. I-94 Service Dr./Jackson St.
1649 – leaving the scene of a property damage accident, Martz Rd.

1707 – suspicious person/vehicle, Hayes St. / Van Buren St.
1714 – family trouble, Oak Ln.
1807 – intrusion alarm, Hoeft Rd.
1812 – trespassing, Belleville Rd.
2002 – suspicious person/vehicle, Belleville Rd.
1955 – suicidal person, Pebblebrook Dr.
2003 – suicidal person, Parkside Dr.
2007 – intrusion alarm, N. I-94 Service Dr.
2008 – suspicious person/vehicle, Pebblebrook
2057 – malicious destruction of property, Arcadia
2334 – traffic offense, Belleville Rd.

Friday, March 5:
0034 – assist citizen, N. I-94 Service Dr.
0222 – intrusion alarm, Haggerty Rd.
0959 – domestic, Robbe Rd.
1023 – assist fire dept., Outer Dr.
1246 – intrusion alarm, Stamford Rd.
1402 – assist other dept., Denton Rd.
1511 – hospice death, Hardwood Dr.

1521 – traffic offense, Belleville Rd. / W. I-94 Belleville ramp
1627 – assist fire dept., Rickman Dr.
1746 – intrusion alarm, Belleville Rd.
1814 – 911 welfare check, Elwell Rd.
1930 – family trouble, E. Huron River Dr.
2005 – animal complaint, Victoria St.
2031 – family trouble, Parkwood Dr.
2314 – traffic offense, Maple Dr./Locust D.
2357 – suspicious person/vehicle, Rawsonville

Saturday, March 6:
0335 – assist other dept., Maple Dr.
0437 – suspicious person/vehicle, S. I-94 Service
0836 – malicious destruction of property, Hamilton
1016 – intrusion alarm, Lighthouse Dr.
1212 – suicidal person, Denton Rd.
1220 – traffic offense, Bemis Rd./Martinsville Rd.
1444 – assist other dept., W. Columbia Ave.
1520 – personal injury accident, Ecorse/Denton
1734 – retail fraud, Rawsonville Rd.
1807 – misc. complaint, N. I-94 Service Dr.
1907 – malicious destruction of property, Andover
2037 – domestic, N. Bellridge Dr.
2106 – suspicious person/vehicle, Marina Dr.
2124 – property damage accident, Ecorse Rd.
2232 – suspicious person/vehicle, N. I-94 Service
2321 – traffic offense, Van Born Rd./Belleville Rd.
2332 – noise complaint, E. Huron River Dr.

Also on last week’s log are 85 traffic stops, 14 of which were on the I-94 and I-275 freeways.

Belleville Police Dispatch Log

Sunday, Feb. 28:
0438 – intrusion alarm, Main St.
1503 – property damage accident, Main St.
Monday, March 1:
1752 – suicidal person, Santa Clara St.
1757 – civil matter, Main St.

Tuesday, March 2:
0321 – suspicious person/vehicle, Robbe/Clarence
0721 – intrusion alarm, Owen St.
0837 – intrusion alarm, Victorian Ln.
1454 – vehicle lockout, Main St.
1614 – fraud, Carmell St.
1621 – welfare check, S. Edgemont Ave.

Wednesday, March 3:
0158 – intrusion alarm, Main St.
1300 – civil matter, E. Huron River Dr.
1528 – suspicious person/vehicle, Capistrano St.
1647 – civil matter, Brain St.
2346 – disorderly, South St.

Thursday, March 4:
0129 – intrusion alarm, Main St.
0726 – domestic, Church St.
1624 – civil matter, Henry St.

1734 – 911 welfare check, Church St.
Friday, March 5:
0612 – intrusion alarm, South St.
0952 – domestic, Carmell St.
1046 – traffic offense, W. Columbia Ave.
1331 – unauthorized driving away of auto, S. Liberty St.
2037 – suspicious person/vehicle, Carmell St.
Saturday, March 6:
1033 – suspicious person/vehicle, Main St.
1216 – suicidal person, W. Columbia Ave.
1433 – intrusion alarm, E. Huron River Dr.
1513 – misc. complaint, Loza Ln.

There were also 22 traffic stops on last week’s log.

Sumpter Township Police Dispatch Log

Sunday, Feb. 28:
0341 – family trouble, 2000 bl. Crandell Ave.
0626 – animal complaint, Redwood St.
0820 – civil matter, California St.
0838 – fire dept. assist, 47000 bl. Bemis Rd.
1106 – fire dept. assist, 47000 bl. Bemis Rd.
1235 – property damage accident, 20000 bl. Haggerty Rd.
1424 – fire dept. assist, 18000 bl. Martinsville Rd.
1527 – mental health call, 27000 bl. Elwell Rd.
1608 – family trouble, 22000 bl. Bohn Rd.
1701 – citizen assist, 20000 bl. Sherwood Rd.
1725 – follow-up investigation, 20000 bl. Crandell
2005 – family trouble, 18000 bl. Elwell Rd.
2345 – suspicious circumstances, Wayside Dr.

Monday, March 1:
0610 – fire dept. assist, 22000 bl. Fenster Ave.
0819 – traffic stop, Willis Rd./Sherwood Rd.
1023 – fire dept. assist, 42000 bl. Bemis Rd.
1054 – suspicious person, Sumpter Rd./Dunn Rd.
1132 – welfare check, Edgewood Dr.
1317 – harassment complaint, 44000 bl. Willow
1426 – animal complaint, 29000 bl. Martinsville
1455 – traffic complaint, Willow Rd./Karr Rd.
1500 – suspicious circumstances, Rustic Ln.
1501 – welfare check, 21000 bl. Clark Rd.
1728 – suspicious circumstances, 49000 bl. Judd
1852 – misc. detail, 23000 bl. Sumpter Rd.

Tuesday, March 2:
0010 – family trouble, 22000 bl. Karr Rd.
0712 – fire dept. assist, 45000 bl. Kozma Rd.
1002 – citizen assist, 23000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
1050 – 911 hang up, 48000 bl. Willow Rd.
1215 – fire dept. assist, 22000 bl. Fenster Ave.
1616 – fire dept. assist, 44000 bl. Willow Rd.
1637 – fire dept. assist, 44000 bl. Clay Rd.
1732 – alarm, 50000 bl. Willow Rd.
1851 – misc. detail, 23000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
2127 – fire dept. assist, 44000 bl. Harris Rd.

Wednesday, March 3:
0006 – welfare check, 45000 bl. Willow Rd.
0125 – assist other agency, 25000 bl. Martinsville
0312 – suspicious person, 8200 bl. Rawsonville
0335 – alarm, 8100 bl. Rawsonville Rd.
0438 – noise complaint, 46000 bl. Harris Rd.
0516 – follow-up investigation, 8200 bl. Rawsonville Rd.

0917 – traffic stop, Willis Rd./Sharon Ct.
1107 – follow-up investigation, 46000 bl. Harris
1127 – suspicious circumstances, California St.
1143 – death investigation, 48000 bl. Wear Rd.
1251 – 911 hang up, 21000 bl. Haggerty Rd.
1355 – civil matter, 50000 bl. Willow Rd.
1548 – traffic stop, Bemis Rd./Lohr Rd.
1552 – suspicious circumstances, 25000 bl. Elwell
1812 – property damage accident, Willow/Sumpter
1823 – family trouble, Rustic Ln.
1950 – civil matter, Rustic Ln.
2304 – 911 hang up, 47000 bl. Harris Rd.

Thursday, March 4:
0029 – misc. detail, 23000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
0852 – 911 hang up, 29000 bl. Elwell Rd.
0936 – fire dept. assist, 43000 bl. Harris Rd.
1058 – fire dept. assist, 6400 bl. Oakville Waltz
1141 – citizen assist, 44000 bl. Willis Rd.
1220 – fire dept. assist, 20000 bl. Wilmot Rd.
1415 – family trouble, Redwood St.
1536 – suspicious person, Timberlane Dr.
1543 – welfare check, Hampshire Dr.
1546 – welfare check, Knollwood Dr.
1631 – traffic complaint, 25000 bl. Elwell Rd.
1631 – 911 hang up, Third St.
1706 – citizen assist, 18000 bl. Martinsville Rd.

1716 – property damage accident, Willis/Clark
1836 – harassment complaint, 25000 bl. Elwell Rd.
2122 – missing person, California St.
2355 – noise complaint, 45000 bl. Paris Dr.

Friday, March 5:
0018 – noise complaint, 45000 bl. Paris Dr.
0434 – 911 hang up, 19000 bl. Haggerty Rd.
0549 – 911 hang up, 17000 bl. Odyssey Dr.
0614 – follow-up investigation, 17000 bl. Odyssey
1048 – welfare check, 17000 bl. Savage Rd.
1100 – suspicious circumstances, 26000 bl. Karr
1117 – animal complaint, Carleton West/Willow
1246 – welfare check, 28000 bl. Clark Rd.
1348 – citizen assist, Rustic Ln.
1359 – mental health call, 22000 bl. Clark Rd.
1413 – death investigation, E. Arizona St.
1722 – suspicious person, Willow Rd./Karr Rd.
1803 – misc. detail, 17000 bl. Odyssey Dr.
1813 – misc. detail, 19000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
1842 – welfare check, Nevada St.
1917 – misc. detail, 23000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
1953 – suspicious vehicle, 39000 bl. Judd Rd.
1957 – death investigation, 45000 bl. Bemis Rd.
2041 – mental health call, 42000 bl. Bemis Rd.
2058 – fire dept. assist, 40000 bl. Judd Rd.
2110 – suspicious circumstances, 24000 bl. Carleton West Rd.
2110 – welfare check, 43000 bl. Willis Rd.
2221 – shots fired, Rustic Ln.

Saturday, March 6:
0039 – family trouble, Rustic Ln.
0728 – suspicious person, 46000 bl. 46000 bl. Judd
0729 – traffic stop, Rawsonville Rd./Judd Rd.
0848 – suspicious circumstances, 46000 bl. Judd
1152 – welfare check, Washington St.
1208 – civil matter, Rustic Ln.
1410 – welfare check, Texas St.
1411 – civil matter, Redwood St.
1831 – misc. detail, 23000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
1944 – malicious destruction of property, Wayside
2037 – fire dept. assist, 28000 bl. Sumpter Rd.
2232 – civil matter, Rustic Ln.

Also on last week’s log are 33 patrol checks. There were four traffic stops.

Police seek suspects in city of Belleville pharmacy break-in

Police are seeking the persons who broke into the CVS pharmacy at 444 Main St. in the city of Belleville in the early morning hours of Monday, Feb. 22.

Belleville Police Chief Dave Robinson said the perpetrators entered and broke their way into the pharmacy, stealing a relatively small amount of narcotics.

Chief Robinson said it appears the perpetrators have also committed the same crime in a pharmacy in Macomb County.

He said a law-enforcement crime bulletin was created with suspect and suspect vehicle pictures and forwarded to the Metropolitan Detroit Intelligence Group that shares information with all regional police agencies.

Chief Robinson said the perpetrators wore masks and gloves and probably were from outside of this area.

Car vs. motorcycles

On Sunday, Feb. 28, a motorist pulled out from the Five Point Mini-Mart, 25 Main St., in Belleville in front of two motorcycles.

Chief Robinson said one of the motorcycles made an evasive maneuver to avoid the vehicle and laid his bike on the ground. The other motorcycle was able to stop. There were no injuries. The driver of the vehicle was cited.

The motorcyclists were traveling northbound on Main Street with a green light at Five Points, according to a witness. The witness also said the southbound traffic waiting at the light on Main made an opening in the traffic to let the motorist exit the party store parking lot.

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VBT

(continued from page 9)

to say and give them proposals for \$1.1 million or SAD as another option..."

Budd said with SAD you can't leave anyone out.

Trustee Martin said the Michigan Supreme Court deemed municipalities had 50% liability. He said he is totally against SAD for consultant-led program.

"We have to protect our liability," Martin said.

McNamara said there could be three different options: send a bill for \$1,600 like they did in Canton, lend it to them from the township's cash reserve and give them a maximum of five years to pay, and SAD. Budd said they would need legal counsel to put it on the taxes.

Best said they would develop it to allow that to happen. The current law doesn't give enable action to put it on the tax roll. He said the township would have to put money upfront to make the program go.

"We'll be on YouTube pretty soon," said Clerk Wright. "It's not hidden ... Let the people tell us they want it to happen."

Trustee Martin said he doesn't want to do something that charges everyone the same. He said the township could lend them the money and the program has to be proposed to Haggerty Sub.

Marc Littleton sent a comment through the Zoom program saying he lives in the subdivision and most of the sidewalks have heaved. He said Wayne County told him

not to cut the tree. He also asked if there would be ramps for the handicapped.

"They've been waiting for Wayne County since 1980," said McNamara. "We will put something together for the next meeting. We're trying to find a solution, not trying to start a war."

Clerk Wright said they should ask Littleton to be a liaison with the subdivision and Littleton said he would be glad to help.

In other business at the one-hour-and-49-minute meeting, the board:

- Heard Supervisor McNamara announce that Recreation Director Jennifer Wright is retiring. He said she has been at the township since 1997 and has been monumental in building the recreation department;

- Approved the agreement with Oakland County for the CLEMIS records management system for the police, fire, and dispatch departments. The township has been with CLEMIS since 2005 and there are 150 other agencies with CLEMIS now. This is a written agreement to formalize the way we operate," said VBT Police Chief Jason Wright; and

- Approved the first reading of a local littering ordinance that is a municipal civil infraction, instead of a state infraction. Dan Power, director of planning and economic development, said the municipal law is very similar to the state law. The second reading is expected to be at the March 16 meeting and then it will have to be published before it goes into effect. There has been littering in the Tyler/Belleville road area from winds blowing over the Meijer parking lot. Clerk Leon Wright said there is a serious issue with someone throwing out a bag of garbage at the entry to Andover Farms subdivision. When asked if there would be a warning first, township attorney Angela Mannarino said the office has an option of discretion. She said there would be larger fines for more litter. "If an officer sees someone throw a bag of garbage out the window of their car, I don't want to see discretion. I want to see something happen," said Clerk Wright.

"I think a newspaper should be provocative, stir 'em up, but you can't do that on television. It's just not on."
— Rupert Murdoch

Van Buren Township launches new website

Van Buren Township has launched a new government website design with the help of Revize, "The Government Website Experts."

At its regular meeting Feb. 16 the board of trustees were introduced to the amped-up website that they were told would better serve the residents and employees of Van Buren Township.

"This has been a long, collaborative process involving every department and includes outside studies," said Supervisor Kevin McNamara. "Every department has been working with the Communications team to build a user-friendly searchable website. I am very proud of the spirit of shared intelligence and community that was put into building out this website."

As COVID orders and unpredictable weather continue, government agencies like Van Buren Township are relying on the most up-to-date communication and municipality website tools, said Alysha Albrecht, VBT Communications Specialist.

"We've constantly discussed how to make this site as user-friendly as possible," she said. "Now with Revize features, within seconds residents should be able to find what they're looking for on the home page."

Some new features include quick links with a scrolling bar, and email and text notifications where residents can sign up for real-time updates.

Another new feature holds space for Van Buren employees, with the role of an intranet server. "Intranet is basically our internal communication through the site, where employees can login and view employee resources. It's a great feature to keep Van Buren Township and employees together in one unified space," she said.

VBT Communications Specialist Ryan Nichols said Revize is a leading government municipality web design company, that works with many other townships, counties, and cities in Michigan and across the U.S.

Joseph Nagrant, the lead sales specialist of Revize, said, "We are constantly trying to be better than our last website. We've utilized best practices for Van Buren's website to ensure top performance."

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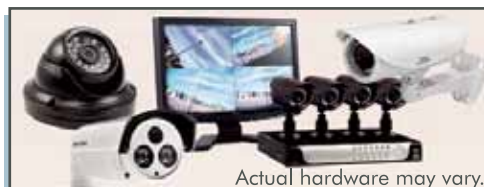
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